

GOP MUST GO ■ BUSH'S RADICAL LIBERATION THEOLOGY

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The American Conservative

Who Killed Conservatism?



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GOOD OLD DAYS

When Russell Kirk came to Harvard to address its 1970-71 Institute of Politics "Symposium on the Coevolution of British and American Conservatism," he shared Daniel McCarthy's concern that few undergraduates would have heard of or read the founding documents of the conservative tradition (Nov. 6). But after a few days, Kirk confessed he was encouraged by the curricular prominence, at least at Harvard, of Burckhardt, Gibbon, and Hume, if not Burke, Smith, and Hayek or Mises. Departing, he pronounced his delight in the institutional continuity of a place where in coming to political equilibrium with the Puritan tradition, the Enlightenment had yielded so much timber for the framers of *The Federalist*.

Kirk was preceded as a speaker by M. Stanton Evans and followed Bill Rusher. The few who came to hear them and a half-dozen others were rapt, but only a handful were politically active as young Republicans. It is curious that while *soi disant* libertarians, Randoids, and YAF luminaries introduced themselves, as was the custom before discus-

sion with the speakers began, neither I, nor the symposium's other convener, George Nash, the historian of conservatism whom McCarthy mentions, can recall any Harvard contemporaries now famed as neoconservatives bothering to attend, though the works of a certain philosopher from the University of Chicago were naturally incorporated into the symposium by our faculty advisor, professor, and later senator, Moynihan. I suspect Kirk and Strauss would alike be blissfully relieved to find their names scarcely figure in the parody of conservative thought booming forth on contemporary talk radio and yak TV.

RUSSELL SEITZ

Cambridge, Mass.

NO FAITH IN WAR

Thanks to Doug Bandow for the article questioning my fellow evangelicals in America (Oct 23). Evangelicals, along with many others, were deceived as to the true motivations of the government in going to war in Iraq.

The great act of killing must force all to examine carefully any justifications for it. This alone would end threats against Iran and lead to repentance on Iraq. Were the deaths of all these people justified? Was attention paid to the reasons given to start the killing? Was the malicious intent of the opponents proved beyond a shadow of a doubt—or even close? To all these questions, the answer is no.

ROBERT BYERS

Toronto, Ontario

TRUE BELIEVERS

I appreciate your magazine's commitment to principle. I subscribed to and read *National Review*, *American Spectator*, and *World* during the '90s and into this decade.

Now I find *The Nation* to be a more reliable and intellectually well-founded journal than those that seem to have abandoned themselves to blind party

boosterism. The intellectual prostitution and pimping is unseemly and disconcerting. How can people you used to respect when they criticized the Democrats have become so slavish, even in some cases sounding positively Soviet in timbre?

Isn't that a sad place for a conservative to find himself? But then, I've always thought that when truth and manmade ideology clash, the choice ought to be for the truth.

About the only place we differ is on the matter of immigration and rights for immigrants. I think that the great majority of them are being pushed away from their natural propensity to support conservative values by conservatives' distrust of them, which leads to *de facto* discrimination. They only gravitate towards liberalism because liberals defend them, for on just about every other issue their practical experience makes them conservative.

In any case, whatever your views, continue to value the truth. There's no higher calling.

MAX SOUTHALL

via e-mail

TAC THERAPY

I would like to suggest that a future issue of *The American Conservative* be devoted to how we can avoid giving in to despair and hopelessness when we see how our Republic is crumbling all around us. In other words, how can we continue to stand for what is right and live responsible lives in a dying age when all seems lost?

MARK VEHOSKI

via e-mail

The American Conservative welcomes letters to the editor. Submit by e-mail to letters@amconmag.com, by fax to 703-875-3350, or by mail to 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA 22209. Please include your name, address, and phone number. We reserve the right to edit all correspondence for space and clarity.

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